

COUNTY COUNCIL

13 JULY 2022

PRESENT: Councillor R.E. Evans (Chairman)

Councillors (In Person):

S.M. Allen	P. Cooper	B. Davies	L. Davies
S.L. Davies	L.D. Evans	N. Evans	W.T. Evans
P.M. Hughes	A. Lenny	D. Price	B.A.L. Roberts
E.G. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen	

Councillors (Virtually):

L.R. Bowen	K.V. Broom	J.M. Charles	M.D. Cranham
D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry	A. Davies	C.A. Davies
W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	C. Davies	G. Davies
H.L. Davies	K. Davies	L.M. Davies	T. Davies
A. Evans	D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	S. Godfrey-Coles
A.D. Harries	T.M. Higgins	J.K. Howell	P. Hughes-Griffiths
J.D. James	M. James	R. James	J.P. Jenkins
G.H. John	B.W. Jones	A.C. Jones	D. Jones
G.R. Jones	H. Jones	M.J.A. Lewis	N. Lewis
A. Leyshon	K. Madge	A.G. Morgan	D. Nicholas
D. Owen	M. Palfreman	E. Rees	S.L. Rees
E.M.J.G. Schiavone	J. Seward	H.B. Shepardson	E. Skinner
R. Sparks	D. Thomas	M. Thomas	F. Walters
P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams	J. Williams	

The following Officers were in attendance (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive;
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance);
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services;
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services;
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer;
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education;
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer;
R. Morris, Members Support Officer;
K. Evans, Assistant Democratic Services Officer;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute taker].

The following Officers were in attendance (Virtually):

N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy;
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP and remotely:- 10:00am - 10:43am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.P. Hart, M. Donoghue, B.D.J. Phillips and G.B. Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor / Officer	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Mr N. Daniel Mr A. Williams	5. RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF PLACE (Permanent appointment)	An officer incumbent to the report had a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and therefore left the meeting during the deliberation of the report and voting thereof.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- The Chair announced the following visits/events he had recently attended:-
 - Welcomed the Commonwealth Games 2022 Queen's Baton to Pembrey Country Park, on behalf of Carmarthenshire.
 - Visited, together with Councillor Edward Thomas, a resident of Llandeilo who had recently turned 103 years of age and during the visit met another resident who was 110 years old.
- The Chair congratulated two members of staff, and who were recently presented with the British Empire Medal, for services to Health and Social Care during the Covid 19 pandemic. Lyndsay McNicholl, a very dedicated Care Home Manager with over two decades of experience in the care sector, was awarded with the British Empire Medal for going above and beyond during the pandemic. Lisa Randell, a front-line support worker at a residential care home for older adults was awarded with the British Empire Medal as during the pandemic she was asked to take a temporary senior position when her colleague had to shield.

The Chair congratulated both Ms McNicholl and Ms Randell in person with Council Members showing their appreciation with a standing ovation.

- The Chair expressed his personal congratulations to Dame Nia Griffiths MP on being awarded the British Empire Medal for her political and public service.

4. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 22 JUNE 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 22nd June, 2022 be signed as a correct record.

5. RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF PLACE (Permanent appointment)

[NOTE: Mr N. Daniel and Mr A. Williams having earlier declared their interest in this item left the meeting during its deliberation and voting thereof.]

The Council received a report which set out the arrangements for the recruitment to the permanent post of Director of Place.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Organisation and Workforce stated that Council at its meeting on the 13th October, 2021 endorsed the decision to introduce temporary arrangements to fulfil the duties of the Director's responsibilities following the resignation of the previous Director of Environment who left the Authority on the 31st December 2021.

It was reported that the post of Director of Place was a Chief Officer post and any appointment to such a post where the salary is £100,000 or more, was governed by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. In addition, the Regulations required the Council to endorse the Job Profile, make arrangements for the post to be publicly advertised in such a way that it would bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it and ensure that the job profile to be sent to any person on request.

In response to a query regarding detail on operational deliverables within the job profile the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) reported that alongside the job profile a comprehensive application pack which covers the necessary operational detail would be sent out to the interested candidates.

In response to a number of comments on the title of the post 'Director of Place', the Chief Executive stated that she would take on board the comments made and would review the input prior to making a decision outside of the meeting.

A comment was raised regarding the current constraints within the Council Constitution which prevented the involvement of Scrutiny Committee and/or Planning Committee in the development of the Job Profile/Post Title. In response, the Council was advised that the due process had been followed as the personnel function was delegated to the Chief Executive, Director or relevant Head of service.

In response to a question as to why a recruitment process had to take place, the Head of Administration and Law explained that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 only allowed interim arrangements for up to 12 months and due process had therefore been followed.

In response to a query raised regarding the provision of job share, the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance) reported that the potential to job share the role was available and that this would be included in the advert.

RESOLVED that subject to the Chief Executive re-visiting the job title and satisfying herself on that point, the Job Profile, Person Specification and the Job Advert for the post of Director of Place appended to the report at Appendix A and B respectively be endorsed.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS:-

6.1. QUESTION BY MS ELLEN HUMPHREY TO COUNCILLOR A. LENNY, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

“Second home ownership is a significant issue for local communities and local first-time buyers in rural Carmarthenshire. Will Carmarthenshire County Council implement the second home council tax premium of 300% from April 2023?”

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources:-

Thank you for your question it is indeed a most timely one. Before specifically addressing your question please forgive me if I do for a minute or two try to explain where we stand on this, what the latest development is and what has happened since you have tabled this question at a national level.

This Council is very concerned about the damage that the unreasonable growth in the number of second homes has especially for beach side resorts like Llansteffan but also to rural towns as well like Cilycwm and Myddfai. In my opinion it is completely unacceptable for people who are rich enough to afford a second home are denying local young people from buying their first home in their own communities. And by pushing the house prices up beyond any means, we say a second home but it's a second house in a way because you can't call a house by somebody who only spends a few weeks a year as a home. It is not a problem in Wales only of course. People from Cornwall and in the Lakes and also in the Northeast of England also face the same problem. I discussed it with the Chair of the Planning Committee in Northumberland, but in Wales of course, language is a unique factor.

Last year this Council called on the Welsh Government to give new powers to Local Authorities to take action in this area not only for the right to raise a higher premium but also via the planning regime and also to put a cap on the number of second homes in any specific area. I am pleased to say that this is going to happen thanks to the agreement between Plaid Cymru and Labour in the Senedd, a package of measures was announced last week which to some extent was according to what we as a Council would have called for.

Among the measures the Welsh Government recommends creating three new classes of house use which is, main home, a second home and holiday lets on short term basis. Local Planning Authorities based on evidence will have the right to insist that every owner has to get planning permission if they want to change the use of a house from one class to another.

The National Planning Policy will also change in also to give Local Authorities the right to manage the number of second homes and holiday homes in any community. It is an intention to present a statutory Licensing Plan for every holiday home including short term holiday lets. Also measures to increase the rates for second homes and on holiday lets.

In terms of your specific question, if Carmarthenshire Council is going to raise the premium of 300% on second homes, as I said only last week this new package came from the Welsh Government so the Cabinet has not had an opportunity to discuss it yet, but we will be discussing it very soon and I can assure you that we are determined to make full use of the additional powers that we have received from the Welsh Government.

Thank you very much once again for your question on this extremely important matter.

Supplementary Question by Ms Ellen Humphrey:-

Is the Council looking at any other means to help tackle the issue of second homes/holiday homes and is this something that the Council gathers data on to analyse trends at a local level – villages and towns to see where the hotspots are?

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources:-

The raft of measures we have had from Welsh Government will be something the Cabinet will be looking at and as former Chair of Planning I felt strongly that it isn't just the premium that needs to be looked at but the new regulations now regarding the three types of houses that are being introduced, being a first home, second home and holiday home that the measures being proposed by the Welsh Government as a result of a deal between Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party those measures will include giving local Planning Authorities the Power to decide on the change of use from one type of property to another. So, this goes far beyond the 300% premium proposal which will be a power given to us. But as I said, because these measures only came to us from Welsh Government last week the Cabinet has not had an opportunity yet to consider them in detail. But I can assure we will be doing so shortly.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no members questions had been received.

8. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE